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# Dear Mark, Bob, Les and whoever

Sen. Mark Hatfield,
Sen. Bob Packwood,
Rep. Les AuCoin,
Anybody else who might help

You aren't going to believe this, fellows, but it's true. Really true. And scarey, if you live in Clatsop County and if you make your living fishing from a drag boat.

The trouble with fishing a dragger, you see, is that when you're not out on the ocean, trying to catch some fish you hope somebody will buy for enough money to keep body and soul together, feed the kids and put some pretty threads on the wife's back, you've got to moor the boat someplace. (Moor is sailor talk for parking a boat). For quite a while most of the guys with the big boats moored them on the Skipanon River, which runs through Warrenton and empties into the Columbia River. Rivers being what they are being filled with water which runs off the ground come comes through the ground and tends to be a bit muddy from time to time, the mud and sand builds up and pretty soon what was a river with a lot of water at low tide has 10 feet of water at high tide.

Now, Mark, Bob, Les, and whoever, to most of us, 10 feet of water is aplenty. In fact to a farmer over in Eastern Oregon 10 feet of water would be something to sing about. But, getting back to drag boats and the Skipanon River, it makes those fishermen really nervous when they try to get to their moorages (that's the place where they park those boats) and keep running into the bottom of the river, which has a lot of tough old logs in it. And logs really don't do the boats much good.

Some of the guys say their boats dig into the bottom when the tide goes out and tends to ruin stuff like screws (those are big fan-like deals on the back of the boats that make them move) and electronic gear they use to hunt fish or to see how deep the water is. Some of the fishermen have been overheard using descriptive language about that river that would curl your hair. Or anybody's hair.

Anyway, Warrenton, Port of Astoria, the fishermen and a lot of other folks thought it would be a good idea if the Army Corps of Engineers came to Warrenton and dredged the river. (Dredging is using a long pipe and suction to remove mud from shallow rivers and make them deeper.) The corps thought it was a pretty good idea, too, and they planned on doing the job.

Just a couple of weeks or so before they were to go to work on the job, somebody pulled the plug, locked up the money and threw the key away. If you thought the fishermen used colorful language about the river before, you ought to have heard the words they used when they learned the dredging was off. Wow!

Then President Reagan sent out something called an "executive order," which you folks will know a lot more about than we do down here, cutting $100 million out of the Corps' budget. That really hurts, on accounta he also wants to spend a lot of money on buying some new military hardware and the same guys who can't get the river dredged so they can park or moor their boats between their fishing trips, are going to have to come up with some income taxes to pay for the hardware. You ought to hear the language now. It's really colorful.

Oh, by the way, those draggers, which is what they call the guys who use those big boats which drag nets, bring in about $15 million a year, provide a lot of jobs and spend pretty good money in town, when they've got it. And $15 million ain't hay in an area where the economy is going to have to improve a whole lot before it can be called tough.

There's another guy in these parts, a real nice gent named Elmer Salmi, who makes a living fixing boats here in Warrenton so when those guys bang up the screws on their boats, they naturally bring them to Elmer so he can fix them, which makes both Eelmer and the fishermen happy. Elmer says the river's so darned shallow at his boat yard that when he gets through fixing the boats and the fishermen take them down the river, they're liable to bang up the same stuff ol' Elmer just fixed. And that makes them use more colorful language. Why, there are times when it just ain't right for women, children and preachers to be around the waterfront, what with all the colorful language being tossed around.

Tell you what, Mark, Bob, Les and whoever, the people in these parts would probably put up a statue for anybody who arranged for the river to get dredged. It's really not a big job, going by federal standards. They figure it'll cost about $250,000 to do the piece of river below the railroad bridge to the mouth and another $40,000 to sluice out a little piece above the bridge. Nice guy named Norm Kujala, who also fishes, has a little fish receiving plant up there and the darned river's so shallow the boats are beginning to kick up dust on dry days when they try to go up there.

You fellows probably get the drift of it, what this letter is all about. They tell me that you and Bob have some real clout, Mark, and that Les is getting to be a pretty good arm twister in his own right. We'd take it very kindly if all of you could twist and clout around back there in Washington and get us some dredging money. If it can get done, those fishermen would be so darned tickled, they'd probably throw the biggest fish fry ever seen in these parts and invite all of you fellows and your wives.

Little bitty kids, ladies and preachers could start going on down to the waterfront, too, to look at the boats without buying ear plugs.

Kindest regards,
The Digger

# Chamber board picks Mason, eyes support for upriver dredging

Directors of the Warrenton Chamber of Commerce have elected new officers, heard a report on a meeting with the Port of Astoria and U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to discuss the Skipanon River dredging projects, both the one approved and two others the Chamber backs, and approved submission of a proposed policy concerning privately-owned lands abutting the city's 10 miles of dikes to the city commission.

Hugh Mason, comptroller of Bioproducts and partner in the Dairy Maid with his wife, was elected president and Bob Moore, chief executive officer of the Bank of Astoria, was elected vice president.

Orabelle Rhodes, manager of the Warrenton branch of the U.S. National Bank, has gone off the board, but agreed to continue to serve as treasurer.

Ruth Cotter and immediate past president Murriel Dunn volunteered to head the membership campaign. Dues for the 1981-82 year are now payable, Mrs. Dunn said. Charts outlining how to figure the membership fee for a business are available from either of the women or will be mailed upon request.

Membership dues are figured on a "fair share" basis, including the number of employees, volume of business and floor space of the business quarters. Information on the chart is for the guidance of the prospective member business only and isn't given with the dues, it was emphasized.

Dues range from a minimum of $25 to a maximum of $150 annually. Associate membership dues for individuals who have no business affiliation but wish to help the chamber in its many civic activities, are $12 per year.

Dues may be taken to Mrs. Rhodes at the U.S. National Bank office in Warrenton or mailed to P.O. Box 691, Warrenton.

Director Elmer Salmi, chairman of the chamber's ad hoc committee on dredging and dikes, reported on meeting with the Port of Astoria Commission over the Skipanon dredging projects.

Salmi said he presented copies of petitons signed by 571 individuals asking the port commission to urge the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to dredge the lower Skipanon from the river mouth to the railroad bridge to a depth of 18 ft., three feet deeper than approved, and 200 feet wide. The present project dimensions start at river mile 1, Salmi said, which will leave a shoaling area right at the mouth of the river.

It is necessary to have the greater depth because of the increasing size of shrimp and drag boats using the river, Salmi added.

In addition to the lower river project, which is being sponsored by the city of Warrenton, the petitions ask the port to sponsor upriver dredging to a depth of six feet with a 40 ft. wide channel.

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# Corps official optimistic about dredging money

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By CHRIS GENNA
Of The Daily Astorian

Officials in the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Portland District office may know next week whether they will get the cash to dredge Warrenton's lower Skipanon River.

The Corps of Engineers announced several weeks ago that a shortage of funds had resulted in the diversion of money from the long-awaited Skipanon project to other work.

This week, Jack Bechly, chief of the Corps of Engineers' waterways maintenance branch, told The Daily Astorian chances are good he'll get the money for the Skipanon work. "I'm optimistic, but I can't say a lot for sure," Bechly said. "I'll know more by the end of the week."

Many local residents say that will be none too soon.

Clatsop County Extension Service agent Jim Bergeron recently told the Port of Astoria Commission shoaling in the river has become so acute that operators of large commercial fishing boats fear grounding or damage from sunken logs even at high water.

Bergeron made those remarks in presenting to port commissioners petitions signed by 200 users of the Skipanon waterway.

Those petitions urged the corps to restore the 18-foot-deep, 200-foot-wide federal channel from the mouth of the river to the highway bridge at East Harbor Drive.

They asked port commissioners to request that the corps maintain an authorized channel from that bridge to the Eighth Street flood control dam. The channel would be 6 feet deep and 40 feet wide.

They also asked that the corps begin feasibility studies of dredging a 6-foot-deep, 40-foot-wide channel in an oxbow bend of the Skipanon which lies south and east of the Harbor Drive bridge.

Port Commission Chairman Henry Desler said the commission supported those requests and was doing all it could to prod the corps into implementing them.

But Executive Director Floyd Shelton pointed out the commission so far was pressing only for the lower river dredging, which he said the port considered "vital" to local economic development.

Shelton said his "personal judgment" was that he "couldn't attach the same significance" to the two upper river requests.

He said the port, as local sponsor of the upper river projects, could be required to fork over the money for that dredging; money the port doesn't have.

Bergeron asked commissioners to consider pressing for the upper river dredging before new rules require the economic help of the local sponsor.

But Shelton said asking for a study of the feasibility of dredging the upper river only would delay the lower river work.

Bechly, however, said he saw little connection between the two projects. The corps official said requesting a study of the upper river work "would have no impact" on the lower river maintenance dredging.

Design work has been completed for the lower river dredging, and all that remains is to let contracts when the money is available, Bechly said.

The cost-effectiveness studies and preliminary design work required before the corps could start work in the upper river would be done by a separate branch of the federal agency.

Elmer Salmi, operator of Warrenton Boat Yard and one of those who circulated the petitions Bergeron presented, was philosophical about the port commission's reluctance to accept the petitions — he plans to use the lull to continue gathering signatures.

Salmi told The Daily Astorian this week that since the petitions were presented to the port commission June 9 several hundred names have been added. He said he hopes to top a thousand signatures before the petitions are withdrawn from circulation.

Salmi said he is far more concerned that the corps plans to dredge only to the city boat basin entrance. His business is above the basin but still in the lower river.

But Bechly said when the money's available, the corps plans to dredge all the way to the East Harbor Drive bridge, including the approach to Salmi's boat yard. "The only thing we won't do is dredge under any slips."

That creates a problem in the lower river channel, because some private moorages have been constructed which extend too far from shore and "encroach on the channel," Bechly said.

# Re-dredging would result in disaster

If something isn't done about dredging the lower Skipanon River soon, there'll be an economic disaster in Warrenton, Clatsop County Fisheries Extension Agent Jim Bergeron told the Port of Astoria Commission last week.

"It would be an economic disaster if some of those boats leave Warrenton and some of them are talking about leaving" because of the shoaled moorage at the edge of the Skipanon, Bergeron said.

"They ding their props on logs," he said, but if the river were dredged deep, it would leave room for them to miss the logs. When coming into the berths, Bergeron said, the skippers have to move carefully along the very edge and then swerve at a sharp angle at just the right places, to hit the grooves the keels of their boats have worn in the mudbank.

One skipper, Phil Shoop of the Sea King, has lost two pumps because of the siltation, Bergeron said, explaining that the pumps drag up mud and burn out, and another large boat, the Haida, has also encountered serious problems.

"The whole area of the Skipanon, upper river and lower river, needs to be pushed," the agent continued. "The port should talk to the city of Warrenton about the lower river project, which the city is going to sponsor."

Port manager Floyd Shelton, just back from a trade mission to the Far East, said the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers had the lower river project planned for this summer but ran out of funds so the project will have to wait until the next federal fiscal year, beginning Oct. 1.

However, he cautioned, under regulations coming out of Washington, D.C., the sponsor would pay half the cost of dredging," he said. (There's some feeling that there will be little money for dredging," he said.) This could also affect development of Tongue Point and establishing a bulk cargo shipping center here, Shelton added, since deepening the Columbia River to 65 feet and dredging at 55 ft. channel to Tongue Point are vital to such a project.)

"Maybe you should push real hard (for the Skipanon projects) and get the work done before the bill passes," Bergeron added.

Bergeron said the Skipanon projects are small, when compared to other Corps of Engineers projects, such as the Nehalem Bay jetty project, recently funded at $12 million.

"I get a little angry when I see them spend $12 million on the Nehalem Bay job and when I ask the Corps of Engineers to justify it and they can't," Bergeron said. "They tell me that it can't be justified; that it was through political pressure."

Herb Palmberg of Warrenton said local bickering has stopped the dredging projects so far. He said the lower river is authorized to be maintained at a depth of 30 feet and suggested when the project is done, that it be to the lower depth rather than th 15 feet now planned.

Palmberg said, too, that part of the cost of the dredging project should be borne by some other federal agency because a lot of the material is from the Mt. St. Helens eruption.

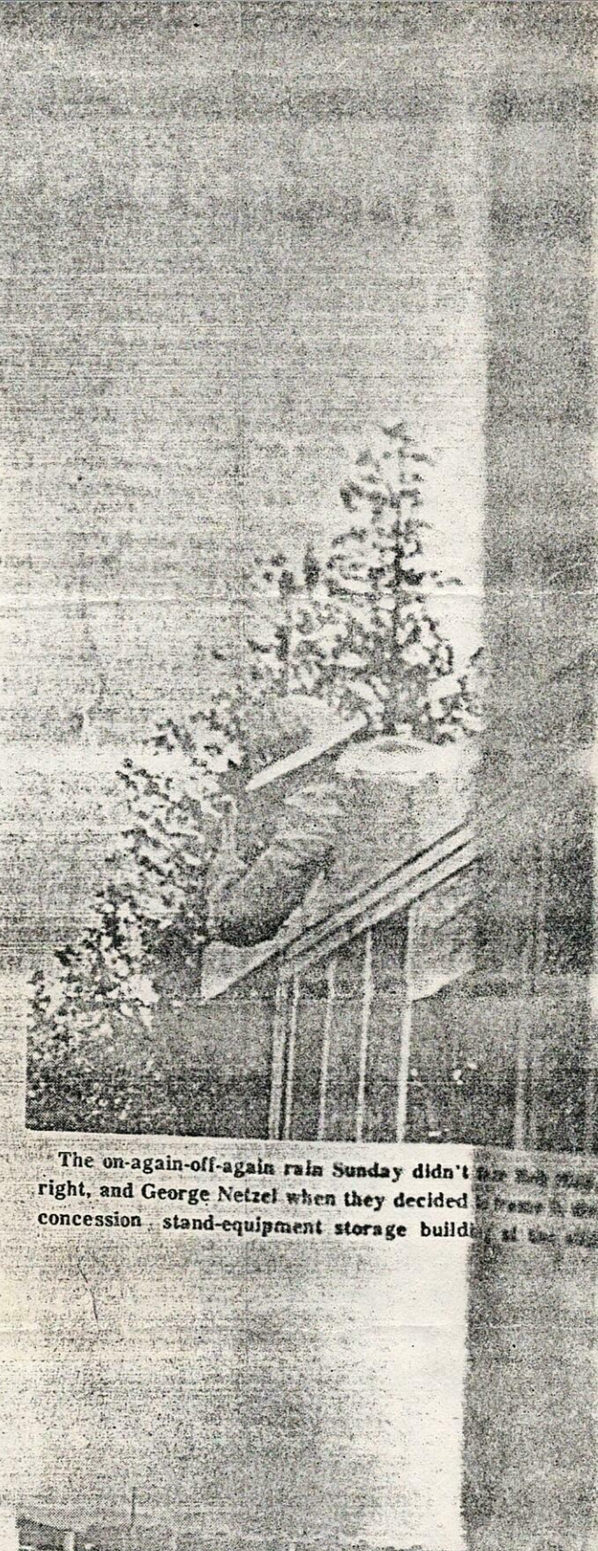
Palmberg said economic justification for the upper river project, authorized but not funded, to a depth of six feet is much better than the lower river. He explained that the upper river project, from the Harbor St. bridge to the Eighth St. dam, has a small cost and can be done easily with surplus funds from a bigger project.

The port has sponsored the upper river project after the city of Warrenton declined to do so.

The commissioners were cool toward the upper river project but expressed unanimous support for the lower river job.

"We should get behind Warrenton (and help push for the dredging), they're the sponsors," Howard Johnson said.

Shelton said it might be possible to moor some of the larger boats at Tongue Point but Commissioner Fred Shaylor differed. "We should send a letter to the Corps of Engineers asking them to maintain the lower Skipanon River at the authorized depth," he said.



The on-again-off-again rain Sunday didn't [illegible] right, and George Netzel when they decided [illegible] concession stand-equipment storage build[illegible]

Jim Dyke ran a thriving fishing business in Alaska until he sold it four years ago and now he's making plans to purchase the nearly-vacant Skipanon Moorage, restaurant and charter service from Skipanon Investments, Oregon Ltd. He says

# Ocean season starts fast

The 1981 ocean sport fishing season got off to a fast start over the weekend, according to Jack Zimmerman, harbor master at the Hammond Mooring Basin.

Zimmerman said Saturday there were 440 boats out fishing from the basin, including both private and charters, with an additional 16-17 boats put in the water over the basin's ramp. The number dropped considerably Sunday, he said, and on Monday really slowed down.

"It was raining real hard when I came to work this morning," Zimmerman told the Columbia Press. "I think the people got up, saw all the rain and just headed for home."

Those who did fish had excellent luck, Zimmerman said, "I'd say 95 per cent of them limited." (The daily limit is two salmon.)

The fish are still very small, "feeders," he said, with the few chinook ranging from 10 to 11 pounds and the silvers running

# Commissioners take blame for 'no' vote

PORT OF ASTOR
SHIP ARRIVALS
BLUE OCEAN,
LA CONDESSA,
Jones, Logs; CRO

# Dredging bid opening set Aug. 4

Work could get underway on dredging the lower Skipanon river channel to a depth of 15 feet and a width of 200 feet by the latter part of August or the first part of September if the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers continue with announced plans to let. bids on the project Aug. 4, Warrenton City Manager Gil Gramson reported Monday.

Gramson said the 15 ft. depth is ample for fishing boats which use the river, according to a survey he recently completed. The Bold Contender owned by Dennis Sturgill of Hammond draws 13 feet when loaded, the city manager said, and the Victory, another of the deepest draft vessels to use the river, draws 14 feet loaded.

The 15 foot depth is at mean lower low water, Gramson pointed out, which would mean that there would be considerably more water at high tides.

The city is sponsoring the lower river project and an upriver project, six feet deep and 40 feet wide, is being pushed by the Warrenton Chamber of Commerce at the urging of Elmer Salmi and Herb Palmberg.

Salmi has gathered signatures of what he says are 571 local residents, including many commercial fishermen, asking for an 18 foot depth from the mouth of the Skipanon to the railroad bridge. He has appeared at Port of Astoria Commission meetings and has asked the Port to sponsor the upriver project, but without success to date.

## Barnum elected

Fred L. Barnum, partner in the Astoria firm of Yergen and Meyer has been elected to a two year term as director of the Oregon Society of Certified Public Accountants. He was installed at the Society's annual meeting in Portland and took office July 1.

A CPA and an OSCPA member since 1960, Barnum earned his B.S. from Lewis and Clark College. He has formerly served as a President of the Eastern Oregon Chapter and member of the Legislative Policy Committee and Meetings Committee.